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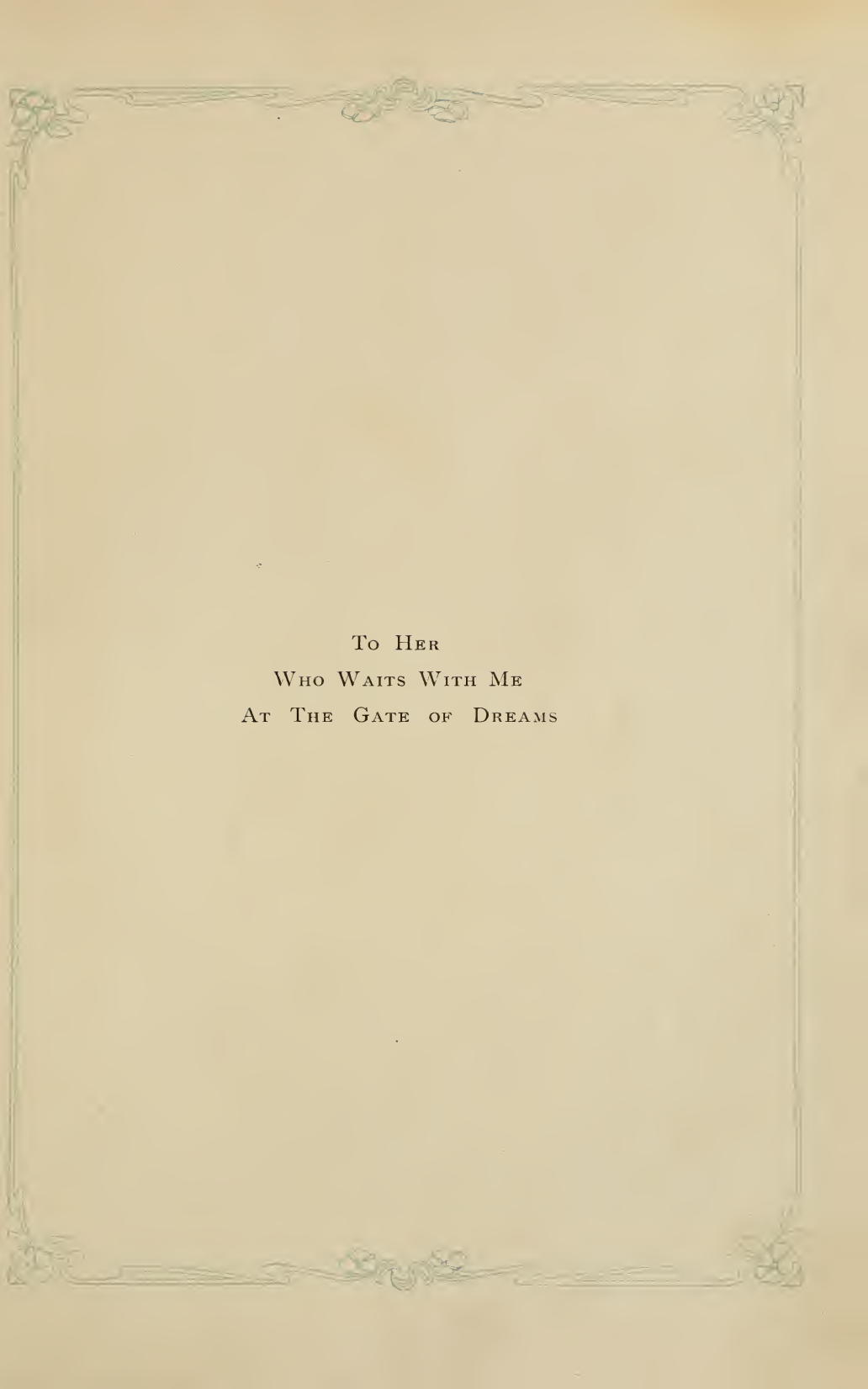
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409

Henry Elliott Harman

At the gate of dreams.

1905



TO HER
WHO WAITS WITH ME
AT THE GATE OF DREAMS

*How rarest blossoms by the roadway spring!
How do the barren wilds with music ring!
How every night new stars of splendor shows
Within the vaulted blue, where Love is king!*

At the Gate of Dreams

Like idle children at the Gate of Dreams,
Piping the tunes we caught along the road
Of half-forgotten days,
We sit with folded hands and watch the gleams
Of light that fall on yet untrodden ways.

Each day we build new castles in the air
On ruins left from those of yesterday
That fell ere half complete;
Each day comes promise of a land more fair
And echoes of new songs more weird, more sweet.

For Hope that springs eternal in the soul
Fills all the rugged way of human toil
With silver-tinted gleams;
Gives every day new promise to unfold
And makes us children at the Gate of Dreams.

*A thousand years and ne'er night has paled
Before the day, but yonder star unveiled
A patient face; a lesson here for thee,
If aught in constancy thy life has failed.*

On the Road to Sleepy-Town

On the road to Sleepy-Town
As the wondrous sun goes down,
Little hands and little feet
Wearied out with play complete,
Now would stop at every sound
On the road to Sleepy-Town.

Busy has the whole day been
From the dawn until its end;
And the gentle twilight glow,
Where the weary feet now go
Falls like benediction down
On the road to Sleepy-Town.

Just ahead the Gate of Dreams
Through the stillness casts its gleams;
Just ahead the hand of sleep
Reaches out to touch the cheek
Of each little head of brown
Longing so for Sleepy-Town.

Let me take you to my breast
Just this moment ere you rest;
Let me hold the hands so sweet
As the daylight goes to sleep,
Kiss the droopy eyelids down
On the road to Sleepy-Town.

*How would the stony pathways of the street,
Threading the marts of trade, amid the heat
Of busy life, become like daisied fields
If wand of love should guide reluctant feet.*



Unrest

As sings the brook a-down the meadow ways,
 Hopeful and glad to join the waiting sea,
So all the while we hasten through our days,
 Sunny and bright, yet never stop to see
The flowers that bloom about our hurrying feet,
 But, like the brook, oblivious of its fate,
We hasten on, the coming years to greet
 Unmindful of the storms that there await.

*How oft we strain our human eyes to trace
Some picture of the future's hidden face ;
And yet of all who've gone the silent way
Not one has dared a single step retrace.*

The Silent Way

Always before us lies the silent way
Along whose mystic sands some ill-wrought day
Your feet and mine, Sweetheart, alone must stray.

The shadowy valley has its own sad gloom ;
There hangs the unknown mystery of the tomb ;
Along its way no sweet-faced daisies bloom.

But Lotus trees grow by the silent way,
Teaching forgetfulness of pain to those who stray ;
Lethe of Life and Life's unfinished play.

If you could walk with me, ah ! your sweet eyes
Would be as sunshine in its sunless skies,
And o'er its gloom new hope, new strength would rise.

But we must tread alone this silent way,
And when you go God grant new light may play
Upon its horizon so cold, so gray.

*The grave may bring defeat and hopeless shame,
E'en innocence may lose a cherished name;
But while we walk this side the silent tomb
Nothing can daunt the soul where love's aflame.*



A Memory

An olden tune, the memory of a song,
A vanished face, the touch of bow along
Responsive strings that wakened all my soul;
A memory of your face now gone! now gone!

*Why no slight message from the grave is found?
Why from its hidden silence ne'er a sound?
Know thou the hand of Lethé guards the way,
That those who've crossed before are Lotus-bound.*

Farewell

Farewell! Farewell! O Sea, O fickle Sea,
Keep in thy faithless arms, O keep
Him who is all and more than all to me
Safe from thy treacherous deep!

His passioned kiss yet hot upon my cheek,
Now thy salt kisses take the place of mine:
O Sea, I envy thee thy burden: seek
The smoothest path for him across the brine.

To-night the lazy breezes from the hills
Will cool my brow, dreaming of him afar,
While thy soft winds, O Sea, the canvas fills
That carries him beneath yon patient star.

Farewell! Farewell! Ye Winds from out the deep,
Blow gently as the ev'ning shadows fall:
And through the silence of the darkness keep
The good ship there that carries mine, my all.

*If in the hush of evening twilight's glows
The history of the day no kindness shows,
Then count that day as more than lost to thee
And pray forgiveness ere the records close.*



Life's Twilight

The evening star and glow of sunset in the West,
A mist upon the hill, the hour of rest.

A sound of vesper bell across the harbor deep,
Parting of dark and day where valleys sleep.

And when I say good-bye to face an unseen day,
May peace as sweet as this twilight my way.

*Look you within the daisy's heart and see
Some forecast what the future life will be;
The faith that glows in every blossom's face
Augurs Elysium yet for you and me.*

A Prayer

O Thou, who paints the crimson on the rose
And gives the meadow daisy heart of gold,
Unto my soul so sinned and incomplete
Thy will. Thy wish unfold.

And when the last sad day shall come
And in my soul
I know that ere the twilight shadows pall
The bells for me will toll.
Then give me faith to clasp Thy hand and hold
Till boatman safely passes o'er the stream,
And on the part I've played the curtain fall.

*So many a life has failed not asking why,
So many a soul despaired that did not try,
But saddest fate that bars the human way:
"To have the wish, but not the wings to fly."*



"UNTO MY SOUL, SO SINNED AND INCOMPLETE."

*Some day, somehow, I know not where or when,
Hearts kept asunder who have lovers been
I know shall be united, hand and soul
And thus shall dwell until the cycles end.*

If You But Knew

I wonder if you ever come this way
From out the Bright Beyond, whence you have gone ;
If sometimes by my path you do not stray
Which since you went I traverse all alone.

It seems my love and loneliness would bring
Your gentle tread along my road some day
When I'm a-weary, with no heart to sing,
And sigh for comradeship along the way.

If you but knew how I have missed your smile,
Your tender voice and touch of vanished hand,
Your pity would be mine the little while
I walk without you in the Shadow Land.

*When we have anchored on the other shore
And Charon turns his boat earthward once more,
I wonder will not olden loves awake
Regret that Life's half-finished play is o'er!*



O Restless Sea

O restless Ocean, like a guilty soul
Forever moving, seeking, never still,
What is thy mystery and what thy goal;
What is the wish thy vastness cannot fill?
The widowed ones who lonely vigil keep?
The orphaned children at the widow's side?
And victims brave who 'neath thy treachery sleep:
Are these thy conscience taunts, O Ocean wide?

*If in the after life nothing but ease
Shall be our lot beneath the spreading trees,
How think you Soul, with lofty aim afire,
Shall there in idleness its wish appease!*

The Remnant in Gray

O sing me a song of the shadowy land
Where an army thinned by the frosts of years
Marches with trembling foot and hand
The silent road of the volunteers:
The shadowy way
With no light to stay
The soul that has never had room for fears.

But a little while in the shadowy way
And the last will make his final stand,
And the soul which courage could always stay
Will feel the touch of Charon's hand.
Then the shadowy way
With no light of day
Will see the end of this faithful band.

But a little time in the shadowy way:
Such a little while and the grave is there;
So while the few who with us stay
And walk with us, let every care
In the shadowy way
With no light to stay
Be theirs to the end of the last sweet day.

*How often Death comes near us on the way,
But passes on and gives us leave to stay
With sweet home idols, while another life,
Hopeful, he takes a-down the silent way.*



I never yet have found a heart so dead
But sometimes touched a softened tear to shed,
And never yet the Winter fields so sere
But some brave plant dare lift its faithful head.

*Since in the lowly valleys everywhere
God scatters blossoms that are passing fair,
Think what the vales of Paradise will show:
How rare must be the plants that blossom there!*

God Grant the Years Go Slow

God grant the years go slow;
God grant the days be long;
And lazily fall the twilight glow,
Linger the Even-song.

Yon moon that fills the West
With its silver-tinted gleams
Will quickly sink to rest
And leave the world to dreams:
So to-morrow's sun will rise
Out of the gaudy dawn
And fill the Summer skies
Then sink—and a day is gone.

I dread the day, Sweetheart,
When I shall kiss your hand
Farewell and alone we part
And go to another land;
For beyond the little way
We see with human eye,
Of it all we can only say:
We live, we love, we die.

So I pray that the years go slow;
God grant the days be long;
And lazily fall the twilight glow,
Sing slowly the Even-song.

*It argues well that Death must be complete,
That every subject bowing at his feet
Allegiance gives; or else that country fair
Holds willing captives with its music sweet.*



My Lotus-Land

A smell of yonder sea comes to our window high,
And a sound of melody out of the darkening sky,
For now the parting day says good-bye to the night;
There are little prayers to pray and Love's own fires
to light.

Now let me hold your hand and look you in my eyes
And see that my Lotus-land, under Love's starlit skies,
Is where I walk with you in magic hour like this,
Where the silvery beads of dew be-star these vales of bliss.

*How very blue must be the Summer skies
That bend above the vales of Paradise!
How every landscape, every valley deep
Will fill the radiant soul with sweet surprise!*

On Love's Highway

One day Love met me on the June highways,
When all the fields were bending in the breeze
That brought new promises of Summer days,
And tulips bloomed beneath the spreading trees.

"Walk thou with me," he said, "along the way:
See all the world is glad and so am I,
Be my companion and each blessed day
Will pass as holy incense to the sky."

Almost a score of years have passed since then
And Love and I have never walked apart,
And sweet June roses fill the way as when
We first clasped hands so long ago, Sweetheart.

*E'en yet while snow is still upon the hills
And Winter's icy touch the valley fills,
God sends a pledge of what the Spring will be
In golden glory of the daffodils.*



In the South

Here every breeze a richer perfume brings
From out the scented woods, where all the while,
Tireless from joy, the waiting mock-bird sings:
Here every wildwood blossom is a smile.

Somehow the daisied fields are whiter still;
It seems the rose is redder, and the sky
A brighter hue; here joy and gladness fill
Each hasty hour and yet I know not why.

There is her love I hold within my heart,
Loyal and true, and every joy it brings:
We walk the ways that never go apart—
This may be why the bird so sweetly sings.

*No matter how obscure the lonely place
Where meadow flower lifts its tender face,
It sheds a perfume just as pure and sweet
As if it grew where gaudy footsteps pace.*

Goldenrod

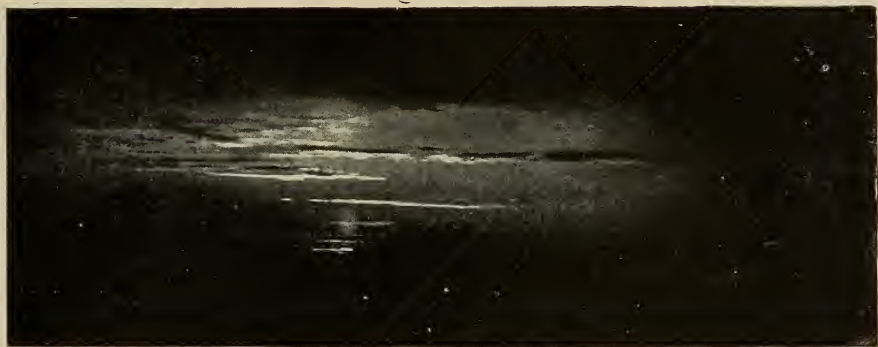
The Autumn sunbeams come in rifts of gold
Across the fields and by the lapping sea;
And as I pass, the tufted Goldenrod
Bows royally in silence unto me.

Though heralder of Winter's coming stay,
And soft reminder of the Summer dead,
No arrogance of manner marks thy day,
Oh, Goldenrod. And on thy crimson head

The crown of fulness, of completeness rests,
The sunshine of an hundred Summer days;
And garnered love that we have won and lost
Thy silence keeps. And all the burnished ways

Of woodland vale and sedgy-covered fields
Are gladdened by thy presence, for the sod
Sends up its dearest offering of the year
In thy rich colors, pensive Goldenrod.

*When lights are lowered in the hall, if we
Into the hidden future's face could see
And know that but a little span remains,
How tender would the good-night kisses be!*



Dogwood and Jasmine

The dogwood fringes woods with white,
The leaves new fragrance bring,
While jasmine hangs its yellow lamps
To light the way of Spring.

Yet never blooms the flowers anew
But a face comes back serene;
The dogwood and the jasmine
Both keep her memory green.

*Ah! those who're anchored, lo, these many days
In that fair land beyond this misty haze,
I wonder if they watch our restless feet,
As here we climb Life's sin-encumbered ways.*

In Your Room

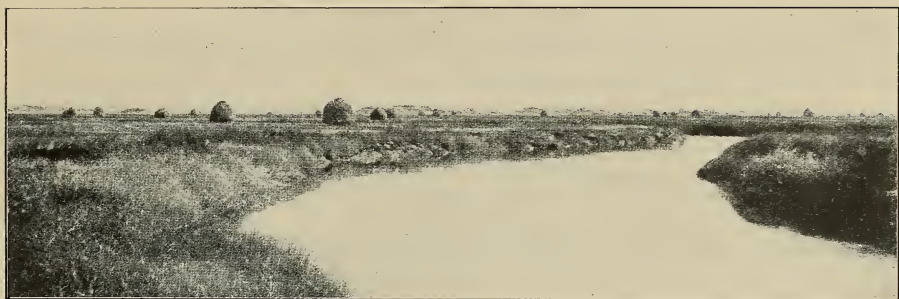
How sacred do the very curtains seem
That guard the wistful pathway of the light
That fain would enter through your casement there
And linger with you. And when gentle night

Has strewn the meadows of the Summer sky
With patient stars, then every little bloom
That shines serene watches in constancy.
If but to lose one ray within your room.

There is the couch where restful slumber comes
To your sweet eyes, and love-dreams chase
All cares and worries from your merry heart,
And bring the sleeper's smile to your dear face.

So when the morn awakes and peaceful night
Has softly passed, then from the eastern skies
A thousand sunbeams race with message sweet—
A new day's welcome to your waking eyes.

*Love knows no caste ; the poorest cottage bare
Of all that makes life easiest and fair
He enters with such royal pomp and pride
As if a palace splendor waited there.*



We Two

If we but journey on the same highway,
Whether it be by land or placid sea,
But one sweet haven waits the closing day
Since your dear footsteps there abide with me.

Your tender look my evening twilight thrill,
Your voice the music of the Summer breeze ;
One clasp of hand and lo ! the meadows fill
With sweet contentment 'neath the spreading trees.

*No voice comes back: the silence of the tomb
Is just as faithful as its awful gloom;
But this I know, if there I find you not,
No flowers for me in Paradise will bloom.*

Then You Will Know

I feel you never, never yet have understood
How tenderly I've loved you all these years,
And never will my heart's full meaning know
Until beside my bed the mourner's tears
Shall fill your eyes, and kneeling at my side
You kiss the lips so white but damp and cold
In death's possession, and the hands that toiled
So tenderly and long in yours you hold.

Then, Sweetheart dear, the olden days will come
Like phantom images that haunt the soul
In other lands: then every olden kiss
And every smile new charm for you will hold.
And when the silent lips will answer not
Your pleading call, know well that from the land
Whence I have gone, I'll love you even more:
Then once for all, I know, you'll understand.

SONGS FROM

“IN PEACEFUL VALLEY”

and Other Poems

By

H. E. HARMAN

REPRINTED FROM EDITION OF 1901

From foot-worn street, where like a dungeon aisle
We tread alone the tireless mill of trade,
I lift the voice of gratitude and smile
And sing to you this lover's serenade.

The Carolina Daisies

A thousand daisies lift their snowy heads
Upon each sun-kissed Carolina hill,
And star the meadows with their white and gold
To where the flowing tide of Summer rill
Eases its pace in lowlands green and wide.
Until it finds the river's swifter tide.

In other lands I've seen the daisies bloom,
And marked the glory of a day in June;
Have watched the Summer splendor far and wide,
When all the world with nature was in tune,
But other daisies never yet could thrill
My soul like those on Carolina hill.

Somehow, in exile, as I see them yet,
Those hills seem greener under Summer skies.-
For there, just she and I, in daisy field
I saw the love-light in her tender eyes:
Even yet as constant as the stars above
I hold her tenderness, her trust, her love.

For swift the years that blight our castles fair
Have left me this, and memory reaches far
To love's awakening in the daisy fields,
Mid hush of twilight, 'neath the evening star:
So thus I bless you for the love that thrills
My soul, sweet daisies of the Carolina hills.

Our House of Dreams

Almost a score of years
'Mid smiles and tears,
We've builded, you and I, our house of dreams,
And still through all the days,
Along the stony ways
Love's halo gleams.

Sometime the day was bright ;
Sometime a Winter light
Fell where we toiled slow with willing hands ;
But Love was always there,
A gleam of light to spare
From Promise Lands.

We've seen the structure tall
In hopeless ruin fall
And hope's fair star shine out with feeble gleams ;
But Love, Sweetheart, is true
As we begin anew
Our house of dreams.

In Some Sad Hour

In some sad hour I'll hold your trembling hand
And plead the passing moments for delay,
When one of us must pass beyond the real
And one must stay.

It matters not to us which it shall be ;
Who first shall tread alone the hidden ways ;
But God be gentle in that lonely hour
To one who stays.

A Valentine

If white-winged Peri from the golden gate
Should ask what gift to me would be most dear
From her bright home above,
Quick would the thought and quick the pleading be
That from her bounteous gifts of land and sea
I still might keep your love.

So on this day when Cupid walks abroad
And shoots his arrows from a golden bow
To aid St. Valentine,
I only ask that through the years to be
Whatever else the fates may hold for me
Your love may still be mine.



“WHO FIRST SHALL TREAD ALONE THE HIDDEN WAYS.”

When Daylight Breaks

When daylight breaks
Across the sky
And streaks of gold
The day unfold,
When darkness fades in mellow light
And day-time angels chase the night,
Then all my peaceful dreaming wakes
To love thee more when daylight breaks.

When daylight breaks
In dusky hue
To kindle diamonds
In the dew,
And shadows in the valley deep
Play hide and seek, and star beams peep
With radiance waned, an offering wakes
To thee, my love, when daylight breaks.

When daylight wakes
Across the sky,
When starlight fades
And moonbeams die,
When dusky lashes catch the light
From hovering dreams, and all the night
Has fled, I wake to bless the fates
For thy sweet love when daylight breaks.

A Day on the Farm Once More

Oh! give me a day on the dear old farm once more,
One such as when a barefoot boy I strayed
Among the weeds and tangled clover-tops
And listened to the many tunes that played
From every tree-top where the feathered throats
Sang ceaselessly because the days were sweet.

And let it be a day in harvest-time
When every wind that swept across the field
Was perfume-laden, and when twilight came
Then all the glories of the Summer night revealed;
When every prayer was like a lover's song;
Because to live was love and love is prayer.



The Carolina Hills

'Tis Summer, once more Summer

On the Carolina hills,

And there seems to be a rythm

In the whisper of the rills

As they come from out the highlands

Where the sweetest mosses grow,

And go singing through the meadows,

With the willows bending low.

I've a sweetheart in the valley,

In the cottage over there ;

Long I've envied every cowslip

That was growing very near

Where she walked on Summer mornings

By the hedges cool and sweet,

And I envied yonder roadway

Long accustomed to her feet.

To-day beside the willows,

In the meadow cool and deep,

I met her on the roadway

Where the daisies vigil keep,

And a promise she has given

Which my soul with gladness fills,

And I love you more than ever,

You Carolina hills.

Oh ! the cowslips in the meadow

That I envied long ago,

And roadway by the cottage

Where the golden daisies grow,

I envy you no longer,

For I've won a love that fills

My soul, in that fair maiden

Of the Carolina hills.



Love is the Same

Love rules the world complete,
Be it for good or wrong,
His voice is but the same
In sigh or song.

The minstrel serenade
From darkened village street,
Wafted to listening maid,
Is love complete.

If it be kingly breast
Or peasant heart aflame,
Heaven touches each alike;
Love is the same.

Since Dinah Went Away

To-night in negro exile, in dis far-off Northern clime,
I dreamed I saw de cabin home of old,
Down beside de Southern river, and de eve was Summer-time
And de story of my sorrow there is told.

De whippo'-will was singin' and de breeze was blowing slow,
De air was full of perfume of de co'n,
But de shadows fall so heavy and de stars kind hanging low,
'Cause Dinah, just my Dinah, she is gone.

No softness in de twilight since my Dinah went away,
No twinkle in de stars dat shine for love,
And de dog, he look much sadder and kinder pine away
Since Dinah died and went up there above.

De cabin it is just de same to others I suppose,
The fields as green and other things as gay,
But a gloom is in de twilight and a darkness in my soul
Since Dinah, just my Dinah, went away.



"DE CABIN IT IS JUST DE SAME."

When Memory Wakes

At dawn I woke, and in the misty haze
That comes between the waking and the dream
I saw her face, as in the olden days,
And o'er her brow the mellow light that plays
Where Love's enthroned. And lo! the tender gleam
Of morning star had lost its wonted light,
For Fate had touched a long-healed wound at night
And waked me, sighing for forgotten days.

Perhaps

Perhaps in some far-distant Spring-time,
When fields are green and woods are gay,
When all the air is rich in perfume,
I may cross your way.

Perhaps in some sweet slumberous June-time
Bright and fair with sunny weather,
When the whippoor-will is wooing,
Our hearts may throb together.

Perhaps some russet, crimson Autumn,
Rich with goldenrods and gay,
Sere and brown in golden beauty,
May see our wedding day.



“—THE MISTY HAZE
THAT COMES BETWEEN THE WAKING AND THE DREAM.”

Everywhere

In twilight hour the softer blue
That glows from Summer skies
Is but the borrowed color
Of your sweet eyes.

The wild rose blush in solitude
Beneath the stately pine
Is but a type of that which glows
On lips of thine.

And zephyr low amid the fields
Where flower and leaf rejoice,
Brings back the tender echo
Of thy sweet voice.

For Nature has no melody
On land or Summer sea
That is not set in numbers
That tell of thee.



"IN TWILIGHT HOUR THE SOFTER BLUE."

Just Blooming For You

To-day in the low green meadows
 'Neath the skies of Summer hue
I found a white-rimmed daisy
 Just blooming alone for you.

Patient through days a-dreary,
 Smiling when skies are blue,
Happy in life's full treasure
 Of blooming alone for you.

No worship of priest or prelate
 Could equal devotion so true
As the love of the sweet meadow daisy
 Just blooming alone for you.

There may be creeds more perfect
 And devotion more lasting and true,
But the simple love of the daisy
 Just blooming alone for you

Taught me the sweetness of living
 Out there under skies so blue:
Just shedding the fragrance of loving
 And blooming alone for you.

And to-day in the perfumed meadow
 With its flowers of every hue
I learned a lesson of worship
 From the daisy just blooming for you.



"JUST BLOOMING ALONE FOR YOU."

My Silent Guest

We sit beside the hearthstone
Where the fire-light's ruddy glow
Brings back the faded pictures
From the realm of long ago,
And I smoke my pipe in silence
As a star shows in the west.
But never a word is uttered
From the lips of my silent guest.

And I hear as she sits beside me
The rustle of silken dress
And upon my burdened shoulder
A vanished hand is pressed :
The perfume of one sweet Summer
Comes back with a memory blest,
But never a word is spoken
From the lips of my silent guest.

I stretch my hand in the stillness
If to touch the head of brown,
Praying a look of welcome
From the dreamy eyes cast down,
And a word from the lips so tender
That would come as a message blest ;
But never a word is uttered
From the lips of my silent guest.

And so we sit in the stillness
Alone through the blessed night,
Until each faded ember
Is lost in the coming light
Of the gaudy-mantled morning.
And I wake in the hush of dawn
To stretch my hands in pleading,
But my silent guest is gone.



The Recompense of Fate

I saw a gardner plant a lilac tree
Beside his modest cottage, and for years
Returning, saw it grow, but ne'er a bloom
Appeared to pay him for his cares.

But in the after days when he was gone
And daisies grew where he was laid away,
The lilac bloomed, and through the long spring morn,
Blessed cot and garden with its purple spray.

By the Old Mill

A picture in the wilderness of waste,
The old mill stands, untenanted and still;
No life about the doors and fallen wheel,
No cottage on the hill.

And yet to-day, as by the stream I stood,
Which through the busy years has constant been,
The meadow daisies bloomed as fresh and sweet
As then, Sweetheart, as then.

“As then!” You must recall the day
When we the daisies plucked beside the stream;
The day we pledged our heart and hand, which still
Makes life’s sweet dream.

For, Sweetheart dear, the moss may cover green
The fallen wheel and Winters follow May,
But love that woke for us beside the mill
Knows no decay.



“UNTENANTED AND STILL.”

The Peaceful Valley

Here falls a gentle stillness o'er the fields,
And in the sunshine there's a touch of gold;
Each zephyr brings the echo of a song,
And Summer twilights Nature's heart unfold.
Here, peaceful home, where cluster orchard trees,
Stands far removed from where the busy feet
Of passing life go up and down the way:
Here not the noisy, but the peaceful meet.
There are no struggles here, but gentler ways
Of life stretch far along the winding streams:
Here are the echoes of the olden songs,
Here come again the faces of our dreams.
Ah! but the touch of her soft, gentle hand
And lo! a stillness falls o'er land and sea:
'Tis Peaceful Valley where her pathway leads,
'Tis always Summer when she walks with me.



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